XEROX

Xerox University Microfilms
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

WESTERN AMERICANA

Reproduced from the original in the collection of
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARIES

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

—:OF:—

HENRY W. BLODGETT

WAUKEGAN

1906

B
B6522b4

I was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, on the 21st day of July, A. D. 1821. My parents were Israel Porter Blodgett and Avis Dodge Blodgett.

I am not very well versed in the genealogy of my family, but so far as I have been able to learn, my great-great-grandfather, Benoni Blodgett, came from Woburn, Massachusetts, to East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1720. There he married and had eight children, the oldest being David Blodgett, who was my great-grandfather; my grandfather being Asahel Blodgett, who was the fifth son of David Blodgett.

When about sixteen years old, my father was apprenticed to the blacksmith trade with a Mr. Israel Scott, of Hadley, Massachusetts;

my father being the fifth blacksmith in his direct line.

After his term of apprenticeship had expired, my father was employed for a few years in the United States Armory at Springfield, Mass., and became foreman of the welding room there—musket barrels at that time being made by turning a piece of flat iron, beveled at the edges, into a cylinder and welding them at their point of contact, after which the outside and inside of the cylinder were polished and ready for use. After a year or two of employment at the Springfield Armory, my father was sent to a new armory, which the United States Government had established at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, where he became foreman of the welding room, the same position he had held at Springfield. He had in his room a bright young mulatto fellow, who was a very intelligent, capable workman. After a few months he made known to my father the

fact that he was a slave; that his master hired him to the Superintendent of the armory at one hundred and fifty dollars per year, all of which the master took, with the exception of a few dollars for clothing, and as he saw that father was taking some interest in him, he finally expressed the wish to get free — said that he was as capable of taking care of himself as he was of taking care of himself and his master too—and asked father how he could get to Canada, as he heard there were no slaves in Canada, and slaves who had escaped could not be brought back to this country. Father explained to him that if he would follow the North Star he would sooner or later reach Canada, and told him if he wished to obtain his freedom he must travel at night and along unfrequented roads, and that in time he might reach Canada.

A short time after this interview the young man was missing, and it was in some

way divulged to the authorities of the armory that he had received the information which made his escape possible from my father; whereupon father was pre-emptorily discharged from employment of the United States.

He then returned to Amherst, where he married my mother, and rented a blacksmith shop and commenced manufacturing plows. His first year's business was very successful, and there was promise of a most excellent paying business when the shop took fire and was burned, together with all his tools and a large amount of unfinished plow work. This impoverished him to such an extent that he was unable to resume the manufacture of plows on his own account; and shortly afterwards he went to New York City and obtained employment in a large shop where cables and anchors for ships were manufactured. He remained in this employment about four years, when he re-

ceived a proposition from his father, who was living in Amherst, to join him in carrying on a trip-hammer forge, and he accordingly returned, with his family, to Amherst.

While we lived in New York, I was taken by my father to witness a celebration of the completion of the New York and Erie Canal.

We went up Broadway to where Canal Street now is, and where a canal connecting the Hudson River with the East River had been constructed. Along this canal a long procession of boats was passing, and on the boats various kinds of mechanical work was being done. On one boat there was a printing press, and they were printing and throwing to the spectators handbills and songs—on another boat they were making shoes—on another a blacksmith shop was in full blast, heating and hammering iron. This canal was filled years ago, and is now known as Canal Street.

I might here explain that quite a large percentage of the iron used in the country at that time was iron that was made over from scraps and pieces that had become useless. These scraps were collected from blacksmith shops and farm houses, and other places where iron had been in use, and brought to the forge where they were sorted. The next process was to throw a portion of them mixed with charcoal upon a broad hearth and cover the whole mass over with charcoal, when fire was applied, and a strong blast from the bellows very soon brought the mass to a melting heat. After a time a mass of iron was rolled from off the hearth and put under the trip-hammer, and hammered into bars.

He continued in this business until about 1830 when he was smitten with the "Western Fever," as they called it in those days, and after considerable discussion and interchange of views between himself and others similarly af-

fected, a colony was organized, called the "Hampshire Colony," with plans to settle in some place in Illinois, near or on the Illinois River, and father, with two other men, were selected to go out to Illinois that fall and select a place for the location of the colony. One of these explorers, a Mr. Jones, was to start early and go around the lakes to Chicago, and from there to the head waters of the Illinois River, and follow the river down until he met father and his associate, who were to go by what was known then as the "National Road," running through central Ohio, Indiana and Illinois to St. Louis.

After my father and his associate, Mr. Spear, had reached Terre Haute, Ind., on their way to Illinois, Mr. Spear became discouraged and turned back, and father continued his journey alone, striking the Illinois River in the vicinity of Beardstown, and thence he followed the river up to Peoria, where he expected to meet

Mr. Jones, but the night he reached Peoria an unprecedented snow storm set in, and snow fell all over the country to the depth of five or six feet. Mr. Jones had not arrived in Peoria when father reached there, and although father remained there through the winter, simply because he could not get away on account of the snow, he got no word from him. The snow went off late in March, and in the forepart of April father started northward, following up the river, and near where La Salle now is, he heard that Jones was on Bureau Creek, west of La Salle. He accordingly made his way to him, and found that Jones had decided for himself that the Bureau Creek country was the place for the location of the colony.

Father urged Jones to make a trip with him up the Fox and Du Page rivers, saying that he believed the nearer to Chicago the colony could find good land, the better location it would be. But Jones was set in his views, and

being a farmer and the brother of the president of the colony, he assumed that his judgment would be followed rather than my father's.

Father then made his exploration of the valleys of the Fox and Du Page rivers alone, and finally fixed his location on the east branch of the Du Page, about five miles nearly south from the place where the town of Naperville now stands, where he made a claim and began erecting a house in anticipation of his family's joining him at the opening of navigation on the lakes.

The arrangement made at the time father left Massachusetts was that the colony would leave as soon as the Erie Canal was opened, and make their way by way of the Erie Canal to Buffalo, and thence around the lakes by schooner to Chicago.

In pursuance of this arrangement, the colony started about the first of April, the members, coming from different directions, met at

Albany, where they took a canal boat and made their way slowly but surely to Buffalo. The whole party numbered, young and old, about forty persons, and the trip from Albany to Buffalo taking nearly two weeks.

The expectation was from information which had been collected during the preceding year, that a schooner would leave Detroit in early May with supplies for Ft. Dearborn, as had been the custom for several years, and the intention was to so time reaching Detroit as to make sure of getting passage upon this schooner. We took a steamboat from Buffalo to Detroit, and were about four days making the trip, stopping at all the places that then had an existence or a harbor along the southern borders of Lake Erie.

On arriving at Detroit we learned that no schooner would leave that spring, from the fact that the garrison had been removed from Ft. Dearborn to Ft. Winnebago, on the Wis-

consin River. This made it necessary for the colonists to secure teams and make their way across country from Detroit to Chicago. It took four or five days to get the teams together and make a start. The journey was a long and tedious one; the roads were in the crudest shape, hardly any work done upon them, and while the smaller streams were bridged, or partly bridged, by corduroy and logs, we had to ferry across the larger ones, and sometimes the ferry boats could only carry one wagon or one pair of horses at a time, and as our procession consisted of eight teams, it took considerable time to cross the large streams where we were obliged to ferry. However, after three weeks of persevering work, we reached Chicago. As our procession moved up toward the fort along the shore of the lake, a man on horseback hailed us and asked if Mrs. Blodgett and children were with the party. Being answered in the affirmative, he proceeded to the wagon in

which mother was riding and told her that Mr. Blodgett had located on the Du Page River, about thirty miles west from Chicago, and had made arrangements for him, the messenger, to keep a look out for us and send him word, so that he could come in and take us to his place. The gentleman who thus intercepted us was a Mr. McKee, who was the blacksmith employed by the Government to mend the Indians' guns and traps, and do in general such work as the Indians wanted done, and he informed us that we were to go to his house and stay until father came for us. A messenger was at once dispatched, and a couple of days after father appeared with a pair of horses and wagon, having driven as fast as he could, expecting and hoping to intercept the other members of the colony. The day after he arrived he had a conference with the leading men and explained the territory which he had explored, and insisted that the nearer they could get good land to

Chicago the better it would be for them. Their idea the year before, when they were discussing the matter of the location in Massachusetts, was that their market was to be by way of the Illinois River. His arguments, however, were unavailing, and after resting the teams two or three days the remainder of the colony removed on toward Bureau Creek, and father took us with him to his location on the Du Page. For a few days after we arrived there we were the guests of a Mr. Hawley, who was the first settler in that part of the country, he having come there the fall before, and two other families having come into the same neighborhood in the spring just before father arrived, our family making the fourth in that vicinity.

When we reached White Pigeon we were told that it was only about five miles from there to the Kankakee River; and by taking that river, parties in canoes could strike the Illinois River and follow it down to any point

they wished to reach. Four young men of our party acted on the suggestion, and hired a team to take them and their baggage to the Kankakee, where they bought a canoe large enough for their purposes, and started down stream. At the point where they embarked there was not much of a stream—just a thread of clear water winding its way through swamps, and so crooked that often after a hard day's work at paddling their canoe they could look back and see the smoke of the camp-fire where they had spent the previous night, so that their progress towards their place of destination was not as rapid as it had been by the wagons. But the navigation improved as they progressed, and at about the point where the river entered the Illinois they began to make better headway, and finally arrived at Bureau Creek a few days after their friends, who staid with the teams, had got there. Still, they always insisted that they had a lot of fun and became expert canoe-ists, as well as mosquito fighters.

While we were waiting the arrival of father, we had ample opportunity to see Chicago. It then consisted of a few white families. There were two stores where drygoods and groceries and Indian goods were kept—one kept by Mr. George W. Dole and the other by a Mr. Hogan. There was a ferry across the South Branch, about where Lake street crosses, and another across the main vein, about where Dearborn Street crosses it. The residence of the Indian Agent was on the North side, near Kinzie Street, and between Clark and Dearborn streets. Mrs. McKee, the lady at whose house we were guests, was a Connecticut born woman, and so elated by the arrival of another white woman into the country, that she made a tea party to celebrate the event, to which every white woman in the town was invited, and they all came, and made, with my mother, eight ladies, with all of whom mother found life friendships.

This incident gives a better idea of the civilized side and size of Chicago than could be done by pages of dry description.

A few weeks after we got moved into our own house a man on horseback rode up to the door, leading two negroes, whose hands were tied, and who were held by a rope passed from their hands to the pommel of the saddle. He asked mother if she would give him a drink of water. She took a tin pail and cup and went to the spring, which was not more than five or six rods from the house, filled the pail from the spring, which was full of fresh, clear water, and began giving the negroes a drink. The fellow cursed her and asked her why in the devil she was giving water to the "niggers," said that he asked for water for himself, not them. She answered that the spring was there, he could help himself; that these men couldn't do that, and, therefore, she was giving them the water and not him. This was the first opportunity I had

ever had to see a sample of our Southern slavery, and it was a lesson which has staid with me through life, as it has with all the other members of our family.

In a few weeks after we had got settled in our new home a Mr. Stowell arrived with his family. He came from Ohio, and was looking for a place to locate, and a few hours of observation satisfied him that he could not do better by going further, and he selected a claim right across the Du Page from ours, where he built a house, and began fencing and ploughing. During the summer a Mr. Robert Strong also arrived in pursuit of a new home, and selected a place up the creek and adjoining ours. Later on Elder Scarritt, a then well-known Methodist circuit preacher, arrived and made a claim on the creek about Strong's, and later on Capt. Harry Boardman located above Elder Scarritt's.

Within a few weeks after our arrival Capt. Joseph Naper and a colony of some six or eight families arrived and located in the immediate vicinity of where the town of Naperville now is, so that by winter time we had some ten or fifteen families within a radius of five miles.

In the early autumn Mr. Samuel Goodrich and Mr. Lester Peet came into the settlement looking for a place for a location for a colony which had been organized in Benson, Vermont. They made our house their headquarters for two or three weeks, while they explored both branches of the Du Page above and below us, and also the Fox River and Hickory Creek Country, and finally decided that they could not do better than to take up claims on the Du Page in our neighborhood. After coming to this conclusion, Mr. Goodrich returned to Vermont, telling us that the whole colony he represented would leave for our place as soon as navigation was open the next spring.

Word had been brought from time to time to the settlement from Chicago that a schooner would arrive during the autumn, laden with flour, and all our settlement expected they would get their winter supply of flour from this cargo, but the schooner did not arrive, and winter set in earlier than usual, and the whole settlement was without flour. In this emergency Mr. Hawley, the old pioneer, and my father and Elder Scarritt went to Chicago and bought a horse-power and mill machinery, which had been sent there for the purpose of grinding corn for the Indians. They bought and brought it to Hawley's place, and all the neighbors turned in and assisted in making a small log building and putting in the necessary woodwork to go with the ironwork to make the mill available.

During this time most of the settlers, all, I think, but Capt. Boardman's family, were without flour and depended upon pounded corn, which they pounded in a mortar, and hulled

corn in place of bread, but after a while the mill was started, and it worked as satisfactorily as had been expected. It ground wheat and corn into a very coarse sort of meal and flour, and, as it had no bolts, we were obliged to sift it to take the hulls out and then make bread of it in the coarse condition in which it came from the mill. So that I think I may say we were about eight weeks without flour or meal, and lived on hulled corn and pounded corn, and after that we had this imperfectly ground and unbolted wheat and corn for the rest of the winter. But we all, both young and old, had good health, and enjoyed our rough fare perhaps as well as we ever have what people would call better living since.

Early in the spring, and when the whole settlement was busy ploughing and preparing the ground for their crops, rumors began to come to us that Black Hawk and his band of Sacs and Foxes, who had been moved west of

the Mississippi River, somewhere on the Des Moines River, was coming back into Illinois, for the purpose of making war upon the settlements. A rumor of the same kind, however, had run over the country the spring before, and the Indians had gone back to their new homes, and we assumed that the present rumors would have about the same ending.

However, on the night of the tenth of May, old Aptakisic, otherwise known as Half-Day, chief of one of the bands of the Pottowotamies, and whom we had seen a great deal of during the winter, as he had been often at our house, came about twelve o'clock at night and gave a whoop. Father sprang out and opened the door, and he at once began to tell father that he was to take his family and get away from there as soon as possible, that Black Hawk and the head men of his band had been at Waubansie's Village, which is the present site of the City of Aurora, in consultation with the Pottowotamie

head men during the whole of the day before, endeavoring to influence the Pottowotamies to join him in the war, which he was determined on making against the white people. Father at once roused the family; I was sent in one direction and the hired man in another to alarm the neighborhood, and by daylight all the settlers in our vicinity, not including Naperville settlers (because Half-Day said he had already warned them), were gathered and on the road to Chicago. After our procession had got well straightened out, mostly with ox teams, we saw old Half-Day drop into the rear, and as we moved on, he moved on with us, not saying a word, simply following in our trail during the whole of the day. Our March, necessarily with ox teams, was a slow one, and at night we camped in the vicinity of what was then known as Laughton's place, where Riverside now is, on the Des Plaines River, and the next morning we moved on across the prairie to Chicago,

the old chief following us as he did the day before, until we were in sight of Ft. Dearborn, when he waived us good-bye with his hand, turned his horse, and disappeared.

As I have already said, the garrison from Ft. Dearborn had been removed the spring before, and the fort was left in charge of a sergeant as custodian; but the settlers moved directly into the fort, and may be said to have taken possession without asking whether they were doing right or wrong in the eyes of this custodian; the few white people who lived in Chicago at that time, having already gone in and taken possession of the best rooms in the barracks.

Fortunately for us all, there was quite a large supply of commissary stores, such as flour, pork, salt, sugar, etc., in the fort under the charge of this sergeant, and within a day or two after we arrived in the fort, and after the settlers from Naper's settlement had also

reached there, they organized themselves into a sort of military company and took possession of these commissary supplies, giving the sergeant a receipt therefor.

In the meantime the settlers at what was then called Walker's Grove, now Plainfield, and on Hickory Creek, near where Joliet now stands, who had at first built forts for their protection and didn't intend to move to Ft. Dearborn, all joined us. A military organization was made, the settlers from each of these settlements making companies, so that there was Capt. Boardman from the Du Page settlement, Capt. Walker from the Plainfield settlement, and Capt. Sisson from Hickory Creek settlement, in command of the men from the respective settlements, and all hands settled down to the routine of a regular military life. Rations were distributed every morning, guard was mounted at six o'clock every evening and changed at twelve o'clock until six in the

morning, but sentinels were also on duty at certain places during the day.

All the Pottowotamie Indians were collected by Col. Owens, who was the Indian Agent at that time, and brought into camp in the vicinity of Laughton's place, where rations were served out to them. Quite a large herd of cattle, which were on their way from the South to the settlement on the Du Page and Hickory Creek, were seized, taken possession of, and slaughtered to furnish the occupants of the fort and the Indians with fresh beef.

The Pottowotamies were collected in this way for fear that their young men, who were ambitious to distinguish themselves in war, would sneak off and join the Black Hawk parties and thus complicate the relations of the tribe with the Government, as well as reinforce the Black Hawk band.

After getting organized, as I have said, after this military fashion, scouting parties were

sent out, consisting of volunteers of from five to fifteen men, well mounted to scout through the country between Fox River and the lake, to discover, if they could, any signs of hostile Indians. These scouting parties also visited the settlements and took notice whether there had been any disturbance made in the houses and premises of the settlers, and the uniform word brought back was that everything was unmolested in the settlements upon the Du Page and at Walker's Grove, and on Hickory Creek. We remained in this way, going through our military observances from day to day in the fort, and some of the settlers clubbing together and going in squads to each others' farms, and hoeing the growing crops, keeping a sentinel to give the alarm if any Indian appeared, and in this way the growing crops were to some extent cared for in each neighborhood.

About the first of July a schooner appeared in the offing, and very soon a boat put

off and landed on the beach. A messenger came to the fort and notified the settlers, then in occupation, that they must leave it, because there were on this schooner two companies of regular troops, who had been sent from the East to re-garrison the fort. This produced a great deal of consternation among the settlers, whose interests did not seem to be at all regarded by Major Whistler, the Commandant. After several interviews, however, between the officers whom the settlers had elected as their commanders, and Major Whistler, he agreed that the women and children might remain in the fort, and accordingly a portion of the barracks was set apart for their occupation. The men from the Du Page settlement at once started back and began the erection of a fort within the bounds of where Naperville now is. They worked pretty rapidly, and in the course of about two weeks word was sent that the families could move into this new fort. The

same procedure took place in regard to the Walkers Grove settlement and the Hickory Creek settlement. Probably by the tenth of July all the settlers had left the fort with their families, and were in their own forts in their respective settlements.

A company of volunteers, under the command of Capt. Payne, from Vermillion County, was sent as a garrison to the Naper's Fort, and the assistance of the men of this company greatly accelerated the work in the construction of this fort, and I presume some assistance was sent to the other places.

One incident occurred during the construction of the Naperville Fort. A team consisting of a pair of horses and wagon with three men was sent into a grove to get some material needed, when they were ambuscaded and one of the men killed and the horses stolen, this being the only hostile attack, that I know of, which occurred in the vicinity of our settlements during that war.

There was the Indian Creek Massacre on Indian Creek, not far from where Mendota now stands, where fourteen men, women and children were killed and scalped, after the Indian fashion, and two young women carried off as prisoners, who afterwards returned safely.

Within a week of the time when the women and children left Fort Dearborn, General Scott arrived in a steamboat, and an aide was sent to the Fort directing the garrison to evacuate it at once, as there was cholera in Gen. Scott's command. The result was that Major Whistler and his command left Fort Dearborn probably more rapidly than the setlers had left at his orders a couple of weeks before. Gen. Scott landed his men, converted the fort into a hospital, and the cholera was very violent for a few days or weeks, but about the first of August it had so far subsided that he left there and marched his command from Chicago to Dixon. By the time he

reached there, however, Gen. Dodge and some other active Illinois Militia officers had driven the Indians northward and overtaken them near the mouth of the Bad Ax River above Prairie DuChien, where a battle took place; or, rather, where it may be said a shooting took place, because the Indians were too demoralized to stand up and fight at all, and simply did all they could to get away by swimming or canoeing themselves across the river. And that was the end of the Black Hawk War.

The precautions taken by the surgeons in Gen. Scott's command were so effective that there was no spread of the contagion among Major Whistler's command or the comparatively few citizens of Chicago, only one person having died from the dread disease.

General Scott lost no time in sending couriers to the settlements to inform them that they could leave their stockades and go to their homes with safety; but as there were no

telegraphs or telephones in those days, it took the couriers a week or more to pass from the point where the final battle took place to our people in the Naper settlement. But as soon as we got word, we all returned to our homes, and I think our family got back to our own house about the twenty-fifth of August, but it may have been a few days earlier.

We found our homes undisturbed, and were soon about our usual avocations there. In the month of September a couple of gentlemen arrived at our place looking for a place where they could build a saw mill. Father at once went with them to a point where he considered there was an available water power on the West branch of the DuPage, and they being satisfied with the location at once set about the construction of a saw mill, and pushed their work so vigorously that by the time the ice went out of the river in the spring of 1833, the mill was completed and in running order. It

furnished lumber for a great many houses and barns, which were built in that neighborhood, for years thereafter.

Later in the fall, perhaps as late as the middle of October, the Vermont Colony, of whom Messrs. Goodrich and Peet were the forerunners, arrived. They had started in the spring, but hearing of the war they came as far as Ashtabula, Ohio, where they remained until the war was practically over, when they moved on with teams which they had purchased in the meantime.

There were six families in this colony, and they made quite an accession to our neighborhood.

One of the first steps which had been taken after we returned from the fort was to call a meeting and decide upon a school-house, and work had been begun upon that when the Vermonters arrived. They added so much to the working force engaged in the school-house

building that it was ready for occupation by the first of December, and we had a school taught that winter by Mr. Strong.

My father built a blacksmith shop also that autumn and resumed his old trade as a blacksmith, saying that he could make money enough in his shop to hire two men to work on the farm, and therefore he thought it best to put his time in where he could make the most money from it.

In the fall of 1833, Capt. Harry Boardman and Bailey Hobson set about the erection of a grist mill upon the DuPage, about a mile above the saw mill I have spoken of, and this was completed quite promptly and furnished another means of comfortable living for the settlers as they arrived.

During the summer of 1834 about eighty acres of prairie sod on our farm was turned over and sown to winter wheat, and about the first of the next June it was as promising a

crop as I ever saw, but on the night of the thirteenth of June a frost came, which struck the wheat field just as the most of it was in blossom, utterly killing the germs, so that only about one-quarter of the field was worth harvesting. What we did harvest, however, was very good, and as the country had filled up during the year before with new settlers, there was a great demand for wheat for seed, and ours sold readily at two dollars per bushel to the farmers who needed it for seed that autumn.

The country about, especially upon the Fox River, filled up very rapidly during the seasons of 1833 and 1834, and settlements were also made as far west as Rock River.

If I remember aright, the town of Rockford, or where the City of Rockford now stands, was started in the autumn of 1833. St. Charles, on the Fox River, had become almost a thriving village; a grist mill had been built, and a wool carding machine started.

In the fall of 1835 my father sold his farm at the forks of the Du Page and bought another at Downer's Grove, to which we moved in January or February, 1836, and where the family has ever since had its home.

In the spring of 1836, Rev. Eliphelet Strong, who had married a sister of my mother's, and Horace Dodge, a brother of mother's, arrived from the East and bought farms on the west branch of the Du Page, about three miles from us.

The arrival of these relatives was a great comfort to my mother and seemed to make life from that time on much more cheerful and enjoyable than it had been when she was so far separated from all her kinsfolks.

Father carried on his blacksmithing on his new farm as well as farming, and as we had a wide range for cattle from our place to the south and east of us, he bought quite a large herd of cows and young cattle, and our farm-

ing for several years consisted more in cattle raising than in grain growing. Father also kept at work in his blacksmith shop, and, among other things which he did, he made the first plow which would work in prairie soil and scour or brighten itself. All the plows up to his time had been made with a wooden mold board, and, in plowing, the plowman had to carry a paddle or scraper with which to scrape off the dirt which adhered to the mold board and share as it passed through the ground, there not being grit or sand enough in the soil to cause it to scour the share. Up to that time all the plows had been made with wooden mold board. Father never patented his improvement in plows, and other plow-makers copied his work, much to their profit.

The portion of Downer's Grove in which our wood lot was located was pretty well stocked with hard maple trees, and for years the Half Day band, as they were called, of

Pottowotamies, had been in the habit of coming there each spring to make sugar, but when the settlers got in and had claimed all the grove, the poor Indians were squeezed out and found no sugar camps nearer than what was known as the "Big Woods," on the Fox River, between Aurora and Batavia, and this was one of the grievances that the old Indians complained of against the white settlers. But old Half-Day submitted to the inevitable and remained the friend of the settlers.

In the winter of 1837-8 I had a very severe illness, the effects of which I carry to the present day; and after I got out and around, but was still very lame, my father concluded that it was useless for me to attempt to be either a farmer or a blacksmith, and concluded that the best thing he could do for me was to give me an education; so in the early fall of 1838 I was sent back to Amherst to school.

By that time steamboats were running regularly between Buffalo and Chicago. I took a steamer at Chicago and went to Buffalo; from there I went to the town of Pembroke, a town about thirty miles east of Buffalo, my grandmother's home; stayed there a few days and then went to Rochester by stage, where I took a canal boat and went as far as Schenectady. From Schenectady to Albany a railroad had been constructed, and, although I had paid my way to Albany by canal boat, as I had never seen a railroad, I concluded to try traveling on one. I accordingly took my luggage ashore and made for the railroad station where the cars stood, which they told me would go out in the course of half an hour, and at the appointed time a rope, which was attached to the three cars that made up the train, began to be wound up, and the train was taken to the top of quite a steep grade by windlass; there horses were hitched to the train and we were

hauled along at about the rate of six miles an hour from the top of the grade to Albany, from which place I made my way by stage coach to Amherst.

My trip on the canal from Rochester to Schenectady took nearly a week, as I went on a line boat and not on a packet. The trip by stage coach from Albany to Amherst took about a night and a day to Northampton; at Northampton we stayed over night, got up in the morning at six o'clock, and took the stage coach and went to Amherst, where the coach passengers had breakfast, and this was the end of my journey.

I at once entered school at Amherst Academy and worked pretty industriously for a little over a year, when my father wrote me he had met with some financial reverses and would be unable to furnish me the means to go on with school any further, and I accordingly started for home, getting to Chicago by the

last boat which ran that fall between Buffalo and Chicago. My health in the meantime had continued to improve, and the next two summers I worked upon the farm, taught school one winter, and worked in the broom shop, which my father had established, another winter.

In the fall of 1842, I went to Chicago and entered as a law student in the office of Col. R. J. Hamilton, where I remained until the fall of 1843, when I obtained a situation in the office of Scammon & Judd. Mr. Scammon was at that time reporter for the Illinois Supreme Court and a large amount of clerical work had to be done, and I was allowed a small stipend for working as his clerk.

There were at that time in the City of Chicago twelve lawyers, as I now recall them, and two law students besides myself, one of whom was E. S. Williams, afterwards "Judge Williams," who held courts in Chicago and

Waukegan for many years. The other law student in Chicago at that time was Joshua L. Marsh. Williams and myself were examined for admission to the bar in the month of December, 1844, and admitted during that winter.

Mr. Scammon had issued two volumes of Scammon's Reports when I went with him, and the third was practically completed, so that it was published in the spring of 1844, and during the summer and autumn of 1844 the fourth volume of Scammon was completed. The work allotted to me by Mr. Scammon in the preparation of his reports was of great assistance to me, and, I presume that while I got some pay for doing it, the experience and the methods of work, which I had to understand, were a great benefit to me, and in many respects have been a help to me through the whole of my professional life.

Mr. Scammon was a very active Whig, and was the chairman, if I remember aright, of the State Central Committee of the Whig party at that time. In the early part of June, 1844, just as the presidential campaign of that year was beginning to warm up, I was at work one morning before going to my breakfast, sweeping the office, dusting the furniture, etc., as law students were expected to do in those days, when the door opened and the tall, gaunt figure of a man stepped in and stood with one hand on each door jamb. He called out to me, "Is Scammon in?" I went forward and said, "No, sir, Mr. Scammon is not in; he doesn't get in as early as this." "Well, what time will he be in?" he asked. I said, "About nine o'clock," and I went on with my dusting, and the gentleman sat down. He finally said, "Are you studying law?" I replied that I was doing the best I could in that way; that as I was then ready to go to my breakfast, he could

stay there if he saw fit and wait for Mr. Scammon. He finally concluded that he would come in later, and said, "If Scammon comes in before I get back, say to him that Lincoln called and will call again later."

I went to my breakfast and was gone probably a half hour, and soon after I came back, Mr. Lincoln came in again, saying he had ridden in the stage coach all night and didn't much like walking about. He took a seat near where I was reading a law book, and after a while addressed me by saying: "Well, my young friend, I suppose you intend to vote for Clay this fall?" to which I replied in substance that I did not intend to do so; that I was an Abolitionist, and Mr. Clay was a slave owner and a supporter of slavery. Mr. Lincoln replied that he was himself opposed to slavery, but didn't see how the Abolitionists could reach it in the slave States. My answer was that we could abolish the inter-state

slave trade, and could also abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. "Well," said he, "you may do that if you get into power, but that will be very little toward getting rid of slavery in the States." I answered that at any rate I could wash my hands of the crime, and that was worth something to the conscience. Soon after Mr. Scammon came in and our talk stopped.

This was my first meeting with Abraham Lincoln, and although we disagreed at that time, he was always after my sincere and earnest friend, and in about fifteen years he stood upon the same ground that I did in regard to slavery, and in less than twenty years he had, as President of the United States, issued a proclamation abolishing slavery in all the States where it existed.

Soon after I got admitted to the bar, I began to look about for a location in which to practice my profession. Quite a number of

friends advised me to open an office in Chicago, said there was no better place for a young man to grow up in the profession than right there in the city; but I had not the courage to undertake to practice there, in competition with the old established lawyers, and after considerable inquiry I concluded to come to Little Fort (as Waukegan was then called), and after some correspondence with Mr. I. R. Lyon, with whom I was acquainted, and who had opened a store there, I concluded that was the most promising place for me to locate in. I hadn't much money with which to buy books, but I found an old lawyer by the name of Phelps in Chicago who had quite a good many books and no special use for them, for he had given up the idea of practicing his profession, and I bought from him a partial set of the Massachusetts Reports and a few old text-books. I also bought from S. F. Gale & Co. Kent's Commentaries, Blackstone's Commentaries, Green-

leaf on Evidence, and a set of the Illinois Statutes, and Mr. Scammon made me a present of the four volumes of Scammon's Reports. These books constituted my library.

I arrived in Little Fort on the 12th day of February, 1845. I had a letter of introduction to S. M. Dowst, who was at that time recorder of Lake County, and, on presenting my letter within a short time after my arrival, Mr. Dowst suggested that I sit down in his office and put my sign on his door, as he had plenty of room and perhaps could be of some assistance to me, by throwing business into my hands, if I was capable. I accordingly adopted his suggestion, and his office was my office for nearly a year, and when I had no clients to serve I worked at recording deeds.

There were at this time in Little Fort three lawyers, a Mr. Isaac Hopkinson, E. W. Hoyt and James H. Trader, and, within a month or two after I came here, Messrs. Chas.

Gardner and A. R. Dodge appeared and rented an office.

Dodge had been in practice in two or three towns in Illinois. He had been for a time in Ottawa, for a time in Aurora, and for a time in Joliet. He was one of those men who followed the circuit. He was not a studious man, and, although naturally a pretty good trial lawyer, somebody else had to look up his authorities for him.

Gardner was a quiet, unostentatious man, and remained here in the office, while Dodge went on the circuit as soon as spring opened. But business didn't come in as they expected, and the result was that about the first of July the office was given up. Dodge returned to Joliet, and Gardner went to Galena. In the early summer of 1845, Mr. A. B. Cotes also arrived, and he coming from the same town in the State of New York from which Mr. Hoyt

came, they went into partnership, the firm being Hoyt & Cotes.

When Lake County was first established by taking it off from McHenry County, the county seat had been fixed at Libertyville, but it had been removed by a vote of the people in 1842 from Libertyville to Little Fort, where a quarter section of land had been bought by the county from the United States Government and laid out into blocks and lots, and the proceeds of the sale of these lots furnished the means for erecting the county buildings.

At the time I came to Little Fort, the court-house was not completed, but there was a large force of carpenters and masons at work to get the court room and some offices in condition to be occupied at the spring term of court, which was in April, and the work was pushed with such vigor that the court room was plastered and a temporary desk for the Judge and some rude tables prepared for the

Clerk and the members of the bar. The Court, if I remember right, convened the first Monday in April, and was held by Jesse B. Thomas, who was at that time one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of this State, and while he was not a great jurist, he was the best trial judge I ever saw. At this time the Justice of the Supreme Court held the Circuit Courts, and Judge Thomas was assigned to this circuit, which consisted of Cook, Lake, McHenry, Kane, DeKalb, DuPage, Will and Iroquois Counties; Will at that time including what is now Kankakee County, and he dispatched the business of these counties with a rapidity which I never saw equalled; and made less mistakes than any judge I ever knew on the bench.

In the spring of 1846, Mr. E. P. Ferry, who was afterwards Territorial Governor, and Governor-elect, of the State of Washington, located here, and within a few months after-

wards came Mr. W. S. Searles and Judge John L. Turner, so that our bar began to assume quite considerable proportions.

Judge Thomas travelled with his own conveyance, a pair of horses and a spring wagon, and when he was through with the court here, he invited me to accompany him to McHenry County, which I gladly did. The McHenry court was held that spring at "Old McHenry," as we now call it. It had been the county seat of the county, but the county seat had been moved a few months before to what is now Woodstock. The county buildings at Woodstock were not yet completed, and so the courts were still held at the old county seat, McHenry.

When Judge Thomas and myself reached McHenry, we found quite a large calendar awaiting the Judge, and he set about the trials without delay. I think my accompanying the Judge in his trip from Little Fort to McHenry, perhaps, had some influence in my favor, at any

rate, I got a number of retainers, and at the end of the term I had pocketed about $125, and got notes for about one-half as much more, which were ultimately paid.

Judge Thomas congratulated me quite warmly upon my success in that county, and invited me to go on with him to Kane, but I concluded that I had better go back to my own office. I obtained a ride with a farmer who was going to Little Fort after a load of lumber, and returned home.

I availed myself of the first opportunity when I felt that I could leave my office for a day to go to Chicago and spend what money I had earned that I could spare in buying more law books, and returned with quite an array of books, so that my law library began to really have quite a formidable appearance to my country clients; and it was a great convenience to my brother lawyers as well as myself.

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

I attended court in McHenry County the fall of 1848, being again indebted to Judge Thomas for a seat in his wagon for the trip, and had quite a successful visit there.

In the early winter of 1846, William A. Boardman, who was the prosecuting attorney for the circuit, removed from Joliet, which had been his home, to this place; and a few months afterwards he and I formed a partnership, which lasted for a little more than a year, and in the winter of 1847–8 I formed a co-partnership with Mr. Hoyt—Mr. Cotes, his former partner, having been elected Clerk of the Circuit Court.

In the early summer of 1849, I was sent to Buffalo for the purpose of taking testimony in an important lawsuit between D. O. Dickinson, of Little Fort, and Sears & Griffith, of Buffalo, in regard to a large amount of wheat which Dickinson had shipped to them, and which he thought they had not sufficiently accounted

for. I was there a month actively engaged in looking up testimony and taking depositions touching the questions arising in that case, and soon after my return the case came up for trial before Judge Pope, who was then United States District Judge. The suit was tried in the office of Mannier & Meeker, in Chicago, there being no court room provided by the United States in Chicago at the time. We were about two weeks engaged in the trial, with the result that we obtained a large judgment against the defendants, which was subsequently paid.

This was my first experience in a United States Court, and I found Judge Pope a very agreeable and able man in the place. He died of cholera in September or October of that year, and in February thereafter, Hon. Thomas Drummond was appointed his successor. In 1850, my partner, Mr. Hoyt, died quite suddenly. His death was a severe bereavement

to me. He was a genial, kind-hearted, industrious man, and the best lawyer of his age that I have ever known.

We had at that time a large business, one side of every case in which we would take any part in Lake County, and a good deal of business in McHenry and in Boone, and also some business in Racine and Walworth Counties, in Wisconsin, Racine including at that time what is now Kenosha County.

Within a few months after Mr. Hoyt's death Mr. C. W. Upton came here from Vermont on business. I made his acquaintance, and he expressed a willingness to come West and locate, and go into partnership with me. We accordingly agreed upon terms, and he came out in September and helped me during the September term of the court in Lake County, and in the spring of 1851 he came with his family.

I was married to Miss Alathea Crocker in April, 1850, and had just got to housekeeping in a modest way when Mr. Upton arrived on his first visit here.

Little Fort had grown quite rapidly from 1845 to 1850, and had begun to put on airs of a town, instead of a village. There had been some sort of an organization under a Village Corporation Act a year or two before, but it was not adequate, as we thought, to the necessities of our increased importance, and in January, 1850, there was quite a movement to get the town incorporated. A meeting was held finally, and a committee appointed to prepare a charter to present to the Legislature, which was then in session. I was entrusted with the draft of the charter to get it put through the Legislature. There had been a great deal of discussion among the people as to the name. As the town grew, people were annoyed at the word "Little." They didn't like the word

"Little." They had got too big for that name. We had a couple of mass meetings of the citizens to consider and discuss a change of the name. We found at these meetings most every fellow wanted us to adopt the name of a town from which he came, and no agreement was reached, so when we had drawn this charter, Ferry and myself (as Mr. Lyon had a pet name of his own, which he was anxious to get adopted) agreed upon a final paragraph to be added to the charter, to the effect that the charter should not take effect until it had been submitted to a vote of the legal voters of the town, and that at such election they should also vote upon changing the name of the town from Little Fort to Waukegan, thus leaving them no alternative, except remaining in Little Fort or taking Waukegan.

I was successful in getting the charter run through the Legislature, and brought back a certified copy, and an election was called and

held. There was not as much of a storm of indignation about the change from Little Fort to Waukegan as I had expected. They were all rather satisfied with our choice, although it had never been proposed in any of the meetings which had been held, but Ferry and myself had interested ourselves directly in looking up the original Indian name of the place. We had seen Mr. John H. Kinzie, of Chicago, who was well versed in the various Indian languages of the locality, such as the Pottowotamies, Winnebagoes and Menomonies, and I had also taken a trip to Milwaukee and seen Mr. Solomon Juneau upon the subject. Both Mr. Kinzie and Mr. Juneau agreed that the Indian word for Little Fort would be Waukegance, but Mr. Kinzie suggested that instead of the terminal *ce*, we call it Waukegan. *Ce* meant, as he said to us, *Little Trading Place*, but Waukegan meant *Trading Place*, and that took the word *little* out of the name entirely, and also consid-

erably abbreviated it, so that the word *Waukegan*, as we finally settled upon it, means *Trading Place.*

In the early days of the French traders and explorers in this country, every trading place had a picketed stockade about it, so that the occupants were protected in the event of any outbreak among the Indians, and this was rather necessary, as all the traders in those days sold the Indians whiskey, and when the whiskey got the uppermost of an Indian's head his grievances toward the white men took generally a quarrelsome form, and a stockade to retreat into was almost a necessity in a place where Indian trading was carried on. Nearly every trading settlement, therefore, was called Fort something, and the *Fort* was what gave it character.

So it will be seen how we changed the name of the town of Little Fort to Waukegan without changing its meaning.

At the November election of 1852, I was elected a member of the State Legislature on the Free Soil ticket, being the first man elected on the Free Soil platform in this State, and took my seat at the opening of the session, the first Monday in January, 1853.

The Democrats had an overwhelming majority in the Legislature at that time, although quite a respectable number of the total of seventy-five members were well-known Whigs.

At the Democratic caucus for the selection of officers of the House, Gov. John Reynolds, generally known in those days as "The Old Ranger," was nominated for Speaker. This occurred in the afternoon of the first day of the meeting, and sometime in the early part of the evening after the nominations had been made, the gentleman who had been nominated as Sergeant at Arms of the House called at my room and told me Gov. Reynolds wanted to see me. I at once went to his room. He re-

ceived me very cordially, and said that he had sent for me as the only member of my party in the Legislature to know on what committees I would like to serve. I told him that I was a lawyer, and if it would be consistent with his relations to the two old parties to put me on the Judiciary Committee, I should be glad to go there. He replied, "That is all right; I can do that. Now, there are at least two other committees on which your party should be represented," and I said to him, "Well, I would perhaps be as efficient a worker in the Committee on Corporation as anywhere else, as I have given a good deal of attention to corporation law." He said, "That is all right; now where else?" I said, "I don't know, put me where you please, or where you think I can do the most good." He replied, "Well, the Committee on Engrossed and Enrolled Bills is a committee that has a good deal of work to do, and as everybody says you are a good worker, I think I will put you on that."

The result of the interview was that I was assigned to the Committee on Judiciary, Committee on Corporation and Committee on Engrossed and Enrolled Bills; and I found from experience that I was on three of the hardest worked committees of the House; but my associates were capable men, and my relations with them were always pleasant.

During the session the Speaker was uniformly kind to me, and gave me every opportunity to get forward the business of my special constituency, and while he always assured me that he "despised an Abolitionist," he, at the same time, was very indulgent and considerate to me, I being a new member and having had no legislative experience whatever.

The Speaker was a character, as every one familiar with the history of Illinois knows, full of quaint and original remarks and quite a stock of mother wit. On one occasion, when business was pretty pressing all around and

nearly every member was trying to get the floor and introduce a bill or amendment of some kind, a man by the name of Darnell, who represented one of the southern districts in the State, and who was a tall, lank gentleman, and myself got the floor simultaneously, both calling out "Mr. Speaker," as vociferously as we could to secure recognition. Darnell was about six and a half feet in height, and I not over five feet six. The Governor looked puzzled for a moment and finally said, with a twinkle in his eye, "Well, the little one will have to have it; he makes the most noise."

It was at this session that the bill was introduced by Hon. John A. Logan, and passed under his vigorous advocacy, prohibiting any negro or mulatto from coming into this State, and providing that if any such did come into this State, or if any, already here, should remain after being notified to leave the State, he or she should be liable to be sold at public auc-

tion for a term not exceeding three years, and if at the end of such time, he or she should not leave the State within sixty days, he or she was liable to be re-sold for the further term of five years.

But Gen. Logan fully redeemed himself from any opprobrium he incurred by his activity in behalf of this bill, by zeal and activity as a soldier for the Union during our civil war.

The session was a laborious one, and as the Constitution practically limited the sessions to forty-two days, and at the end of forty-two days our pay was reduced to one dollar per day, we were naturally in a great hurry to get our business completed, and the legislation necessarily hasty, but I think there were fewer mistakes made than in later years when the members had more time.

We had no chaplain in the Legislature, as they never have had since to my knowledge, but an arrangement was made by which resi-

dent clergymen in Springfield took turns in coming in every morning at the hour of meeting and opening the session with prayer. One morning, toward the close of the session, we met very early, probably two hours earlier than our usual time for meeting, and none of the clergy appeared to open the session; whereupon the Speaker called upon Rev. Mr. Cullom, the father of Hon. Shelby M. Cullom, who was a member from Tazewell County, to open the session with prayer. He came forward to the desk and made a short prayer. I only remember one paragraph, which I think was the closing one, in which he said: "O, God, bless this Legislature, bless the individual members thereof, give them wisdom and enable them to so conduct themselves while here that they will meet with the approbation of their constituents at home."

It has often occurred to me since, that the son, Shelby, has shaped his political career sub-

stantially on the lines indicated by his father's prayer.

At this session of the Legislature a bill was passed establishing a State Normal School, and also one providing for an additional penitentiary. In fact, the session was one of the most profitable, and I may say, respectable, that has ever been held in our State.

At this session, too, a bill was passed for the election of a State Superintendent of Schools. I took an active part in the discussion of this measure, and it is at least a source of pride to myself that I contributed in my humble way to committing our State to the policy of making free public schools a state measure—they giving our common schools a uniform character throughout the State.

In the summer of 1853 I was appointed attorney for the Illinois and Wisconsin Railroad, as it was then called, that is, a railroad line extending from Chicago northwesterly to Janes-

ville, Wisconsin, and thence up the Rock River Valley to Lake Winnebago, and thence to Green Bay by way of Fond du Lac to Oshkosh, and I devoted my entire time that summer and autumn to securing the right of way and adjusting the legal questions which arose in the way of the corporation at the commencement of the construction of its line.

And in the fall of the same year I was appointed attorney for the Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad, a charter for which had been obtained in 1851, and lain dormant up to that time, but capitalists had come forward that summer and agreed to put up the necessary money and begin the work, and I gave a good deal of attention during the winter of 1853–4 to securing right of way, depot grounds, etc., between Chicago and the state line. The contract for the construction of the road was let during the winter of 1853–4, and work began as soon as the frost was out of the ground in

the spring, and was pushed with such vigor that the line was completed from Chicago to Waukegan, and the cars were running the forepart of January, 1855. The work between Milwaukee and the state line was also pushed with vigor during the same time, but there was delay encountered in completing a bridge across Root River at Racine, so that the cars did not run upon that part of the line until about the first of June, 1855, when the two divisions of the road were completed and open for business.

For a time the two divisions were operated under separate managements, respectively known as the "Chicago Division," and the "Wisconsin Division," but about 1860 the two divisions were consolidated into one corporation, and I became the President thereof for a time, and about 1868 the line from Chicago to Milwaukee was leased to the present Chicago & North-Western Railway Company. But I may say that from the time I accepted the at-

torneyship of the Illinois and Wisconsin lines in the summer of 1853 until 1869, my main business was that of a railroad attorney, giving very little attention to general business. Mr. F. H. Winston, of Chicago, and myself were appointed local attorneys for what is now known as the "Lake Shore Road," between Toledo and Chicago, and also for the "Pittsburg, Ft. Wayne and Chicago Railroad."

In June, 1860, Mr. Abraham Lincoln was nominated as the Republican candidate for the Presidency, and one of the most exciting and interesting political campaigns, in its effect and influence upon the nation, ensued after this nomination.

I took an active interest in the campaign, and as I was a member of the State Senate at the time the civil war began and for a year thereafter, took an active interest in putting Illinois upon a war footing, and also took a good deal of interest and put in a good deal of

work in obtaining the enlistment of men and the organization of regiments for the war, and during the war I went to very many of the battlefields and saw much of our army in the field.

In the month of March, 1862, the battle of Pea Ridge was fought in the northwest corner of Arkansas. Lake County had a large number of men engaged in that battle; among them were two of my brothers, and on hearing of the battle, Dr. Moses Evans and myself started at once for the battlefield. We had a long, tedious, and in a certain sense eventful journey. We went to St. Louis by railroad, where we obtained orders from the army headquarters directing all commanders of posts to furnish us with horses for our journey. We went by rail from St. Louis to Rolla, about eighty miles, but when we got there, we found that there were no horses to be had. We secured a wagon from an old farmer who lived

near Springfield, Mo., and started with him. When we arrived at Lebanon, Mo., however, we found horses in the corral, and obtained pretty sorry, worn-out looking animals to carry us to Springfield, Mo. There we turned our horses, which we had obtained at Lebanon, over to the post commander, and he agreed to furnish us that evening with other horses to carry us to the battlefield, which was about fifty miles away. As I was coming from the corral, where I had been to select the horses, I met a young man by the name of Herrington from Geneva, Kane County, in this State. He had been sent from the battlefield with dispatches to Springfield. He said to me that he was intending to return that night for the reason that he thought it dangerous to travel over the line between the battlefield and Springfield in the daytime, as there were guerrilla squads of rebels traversing the country, and were liable to ambuscade us if we were travelling in daylight. I lost no time

in finding Dr. Evans and informed him of the situation, and announced that I, at least, intended to go on with Herrington that evening, and gave my reasons why I was intending to do so. The Doctor replied that he would go, too, and we repaired with Herrington to an eating house, as they called them in those days, where we obtained our supper, and about sundown mounted our horses and started down the road, being a little more than fifty miles from Springfield to the army headquarters near the battlefield. We had an anxious but otherwise pleasant ride through the night, and just as the eastern sky was streaked with dawn we arrived at Cassville, where the hospitals for our sick men and those wounded at Pea Ridge had been established. Dr. Evans left us there, as his interest centered rather in the hospitals than elsewhere, and with my companion of the night I passed on sixteen or twenty miles further to the battlefield. I found my brothers and most

of the men from Lake County were unharmed, there being a few slightly wounded ones at the hospitals in Cassville, whom I knew Dr. Evans would sooner or later find out.

I remained at the headquarters of the army for about a week, during which I made arrangements for the discharge of two men who had so nearly broken down in the service that they were no longer fit for duty, and also obtained from headquarters horses for our return journey to Rolla. The return trip was an uneventful one. No guerrilla bands had been seen on the line between the army headquarters and Springfield, and we made the trip without molestation or any special delay, I arriving home about the last day of March or the first day of April.

I had an important suit pending before the Supreme Court of Illinois, which was to come up for hearing on Monday, the 7th, if I remember the date aright, of April. I left home Saturday evening and went to Springfield, taking

my papers along, and after getting my breakfast Sunday morning, I went into the law library of the Supreme Court to look up some authorities and get ready for the hearing the next day. I worked away industriously at the books in the library until perhaps it was two o'clock in the afternoon, when a man came in and told me that a big battle was going on at and near Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. Of course, I felt more interest in the battles, at that time, than I could in any lawsuit, and at once repaired to the executive rooms in the State House, where I found Governor Yates and quite a number of the state officers and the Governor's friends, who were receiving dispatches, saying in substance that Grant had been attacked in the early morning, and a very hot fight was going on. About five o'clock in the afternoon, however, a dispatch came saying that the battle was over for the day, but would probably be resumed the next morning, and that our forces had maintained their position.

Governor Yates at once turned to two or three of us who were talking upon the subject, and said, "Let us go down there," and remarked that we could leave that evening for Decatur, where we would get the Illinois Central train from Chicago and be in Cairo the next morning, and we could undoubtedly get a dispatch boat or a boat of some kind up the the river that morning, so as to reach the battlefield certainly by Monday morning. The plan was agreed upon, and we took the train to Decatur, where we got the Illinois Central train and went to Cairo; there found a dispatch boat ready to leave in the course of half an hour. The Governor's official position was recognized, and the rest of the party were taken aboard as part of his personal staff; and proceeding up the Ohio to the mouth of the Tennessee, and thence up the Tennessee, arrived within five or six miles of the ground before dark, but the navigation was so intricate, and our pilot not

over-familiar with the water, and the result was that the captain tied up his boat for the night, saying he would not run the risk of attempting to run the river at night.

Early the next morning we proceeded on, and reached the battlefield just as the tired and worn-out soldiers were getting their breakfast. We found, however, that the battle was practically over. The rebel forces had retreated or retired without making any more effort at an attack, leaving a detail to bury their dead and take care of their wounded. General Grant, who was in command, furnished us with horses, and we passed through the entire battlefield during the morning and afternoon.

I will not attempt to describe the battlefield, as that has become historic, but will only say that it was the first and only time in my experience when I saw men lying dead upon the field where they had fallen. Parties were at work digging graves and burying the dead,

and ambulances were passing back and forth carrying wounded men, who were found on the field, where they had lain over night without food or medical care.

General Grant was preparing to pursue the retreating enemy, but by the time we returned to his headquarters about noon, he had learned from his scouts that they had got beyond reach and into their fortified camp, and that pursuit would be unavailing. Lake County had three companies or more in the Fifteenth Illinois, which was engaged in that battle; that regiment had suffered more severely perhaps than any other regiment in loss of men, and especially of officers. Its colonel was away on a leave of absence. Its lieutenant colonel, major and all the captains but one had been killed or so badly wounded as to be unfit for duty. What was left of the regiment was drawn up in line as they had heard that Governor Yates was coming, and a sorry remnant

it was. Captain (now General) George C. Rogers was in command of the regiment as senior officer, and I shall never forget his soldierly bearing as he saluted the Governor of his State as we rode past them.

We remained upon the battlefield and at headquarters until about nine o'clock that evening, when we went again on the dispatch boat which had brought us there, and returned to Cairo. The visit was a profitable one, both to our state officers and to our troops engaged in that battle, as it enabled Governor Yates to see upon the grounds the merits of the officers in command as well as the courage and usefulness of the men. We also inspected the hospitals which had been improvised, and saw that our regiments were well provided with surgeons and surgical appliances; perhaps as well, and we thought better, than the troops from any other state.

Our boat was delayed so that we did not get the train on the Illinois Central road that we expected to have connected with at Cairo the next morning, so we kept on up the river to St. Louis, where we got the Chicago and Alton road and reached Springfield a few hours later than we would have done had we made connections with the Illinois Central road at Cairo.

When I got to Springfield, I found the Supreme Court had called my case, and as I was not there, had taken it under advisement with leave to file a brief within twenty days. I was, therefore, saved the trouble of making an oral argument, and perhaps did as well with the brief, or even better, than if I had made an oral argument, for I got the judgment which I was contending for.

The summer of 1862 was uneventful so far as I now recall. A call was made upon our state to furnish additional regiments, and that

call was responded to by the offer of more men than were asked for. The 96th regiment was organized in the latter part of August, 1862, in which was incorporated four companies from Lake County and six from Jo Davis. My brother, A. Z. Blodgett, raised one of the companies, and my brother, E. A. Blodgett, was made adjutant of the regiment.

In the latter part of August, 1863, the battle of Chickamauga was fought, in which Illinois had a large number of troops engaged, among which was the 96th Illinois, of which my brother, E. A., was the adjutant, and my brother, A. Z., was a captain. The captain was very badly wounded, and a dispatch was sent me saying that his wound was dangerous and might perhaps prove fatal. I lost no time in leaving for the army. Went to Nashville, where I was informed that a strict order had been made prohibiting any civilians from being forwarded to Chattanooga, where our army

then lay. The post at Nashville was under the command of Colonel Paine, of this State. I went at once to his headquarters, told him the situation, and he replied promptly: "You shall be made an exception to the rule." He accordingly gave me a passport, and also one for Dr. Wolcott, who was the surgeon general of Wisconsin, and four ladies who had been sent out by the sanitary commission as nurses. We took the train and went to Bridgeport on the Tennessee River, expecting to go from Bridgeport to Chattanooga by rail, but found that wasn't possible, as the road was in the possession of the Confederates, and had been broken up and rendered useless, and that our only way of getting to Chattanooga was to go up what was called the Sequatchie Valley to the foot of the mountain, about fifty miles from Bridgeport, and there pass over the mountain to Chattanooga, about ten miles further. The commander of the post furnished an ambulance for

the ladies and horses for Dr. Wolcott and myself, and we started without delay to make a sixty mile journey by land. We travelled about twenty miles that afternoon, and then put up at a wayside private house for the night, Dr. Wolcott and myself sleeping in an empty corn-crib, as there was no room for us in the house, but we having blankets, had no difficulty in getting a fair night's sleep. We started early the next morning, about as early as we could see, and pushed along as fast as we could, but overtook an immense wagon train of about two hundred army wagons, also making their way from Bridgeport to Chattanooga with supplies of ammunition and provisions for our army there.

We followed along in the rear of this supply train for quite a distance, until finally I saw a side road which I thought might let us out, and started on up that road, and finally got alongside of the train and reached its advance

wagons. Here I fell in with a young lieutenant, who was in command of the escort, which was mainly made up of convalescent soldiers returning from the hospitals to their various commands at Chattanooga. We moved on ahead of this train, as the officer in command told us that our ambulance could not get past his column of wagons until we reached a certain point where there was a side road which would enable our ambulance to pass them. While we were jogging along and I was getting the information I wanted, suddenly we heard a fusillade of musketry and small arms, and very soon afterwards a crowd of mule-drivers and negroes came pelting down the road and yelling, "Get out of the way. The rebels are burning wagons and killing the horses and mules at the foot of the mountain."

The officer who commanded the escort at once sent word back for his men to come up. They were riding in wagons wherever there

was room for them, and scattered along through the train, and he also gave orders for the wagons to turn off from the highway into an open field, where he proposed to park them, as it was called; that is, to throw them into a square, and where the guard could, perhaps, defend them more effectually.

After he had given these orders, he turned to me and said: "I cannot leave my command, but if you are not afraid to do it, I do wish you would start up the road and see what you can, and bring me word." I nothing loath at his suggestion, started out, and had gone about a mile, when I saw five or six hundred butternut colored rebels pelting down the road at a rapid gait. I at once turned to the right into the woods which skirted the road, and turned back toward this open field where the wagons were to be parked. I found my path intercepted by a fence just at the line between the woods and this open field, but put

my old horse to his mettle and he carried me over, breaking a rail however, as he went. Just at the same instant I turned my eyes to my right, and saw a butternut colored fellow also leaping the fence. He discovered me at about the time I got over the fence, and turning toward me, ordered me to halt. He was perhaps fifty yards or so from me. I didn't halt, and he began firing at me with his revolver. I could hear the bullets whistle, but they didn't come very near, and I kept on; he finally jerked his horse back on his haunches, pulled up his carbine, took aim at me, and fired. I heard the whistle of that bullet very close to my ear, but knew at once that if I could hear the whistle of the bullet, it had not hit me, and kept on. He seemed to give up the chase at that point, and I passed around to the left of the wagons which had hauled up into the open field; and these troopers whom I had met coming down the road at once began killing the

mules and burning the wagons, that had been turned out of the road. I kept on down the road for a mile or more until I got to the further end of the procession of wagons; and a half mile or so below there, I found the ambulance which contained the ladies and Dr. Wolcott, drawn off the road and under guard of a Rebel sentinel, and under the shade of a large tree. I at once commenced an argument with the sentry, telling him that he had no business to intercept or delay these ladies, that they were members of the United States Sanitary Commission, and had been sent to the front by that commission, that Dr. Wolcott was the Surgeon General of the State of Wisconsin and going to the front to look after the wounded men from his state, that we were all civilians bound to Chattanooga on a mission of mercy. The guard seemed to be an intelligent man and said well he had nothing to do with it, he was doing just what he was ordered to do. I asked

him if he couldn't find an officer and tell him who we were, asked him who was the commander of the raiding party, and he said General Joseph Wheeler was in command of the force. I asked him if he couldn't find General Wheeler or some of the higher officers and ask them to come there so we could be set at liberty. He asked me if I would give him my word of honor that we would all remain there during the time he was gone, and I said we would. He was gone perhaps half an hour, when he came back accompanied by an officer. I say he was an officer because he was wearing epaulets. When he came up he didn't introduce himself, but simply said : "You are members of the United States Sanitary Commission," looking at the ladies, "and this old gentleman," pointing to Dr. Wolcott, who was perhaps seventy years old, "is a state surgeon," and turning to me, "and you are also a Sanitary Commission man !" I said, "Your information

is correct, sir, that is just exactly what we are." "Well," said he, "you can go."

I then asked him how we could get by these burning wagons, many of which were loaded with ammunition, which was exploding and filling the air with bullets, and how we could get into a road which would take us to Chattanooga, and he said: "There is a road off to the left a short distance, a mile or so, running about parallel with the road you have been traveling on, and if you follow that road it will probably take you to some road, which will carry you over the mountain to Chattanooga."

Dr. Wolcott and myself went ahead and the ambulance followed us until we found the road which had been pointed out to us by the officer, and after following that road two or three miles, we found the road which was evidently an old cart road to Chattanooga, which branched off to the right, and following that

for a couple of miles we struck a road which proved to be the Chattanooga road, which a a man living in the vicinity said was about sixteen miles away.

It was then between eleven and twelve o'clock. I felt sure that the ambulance with the ladies would not be able to make Chattanooga that night, and proposed to Dr. Wolcott that he and I ride ahead and get there and the ladies could stop at some of the houses along the road, which this countryman had informed us was pretty well settled, and that the people were at home minding their own business. Dr. Wolcott said no, he was going to stay with the ladies and the ambulance; he had started with them and was going to stay with them. I said: "I don't see that I can do any good, and I will go on, as I fear my brother needs my assistance." I accordingly struck off to the right on a road which I knew was leading in the right direction, and passed

through a piece of quite thick woods, and there came across a party of men putting up a telegraph wire, as they said, to reach from Chattanooga to Bridgeport, and they told me that by keeping on about three or four miles further on the trail I was following, I would reach the river road, as it was called, which is the direct road from Chattanooga to Bridgeport. I followed these directions and finally struck the road, but it was growing dark, and I did not care to follow it in the dark, not knowing whom I might encounter, and accordingly turned off to the left and went to a log cabin where I found some people who said I might stay there over night, that they had corn to feed my horse, and would give me some corn-bread, which was the best they could do for me. I accordingly accepted the hospitality, such as it was, and fed my horse and took my blankets and camped down upon the floor of the cabin and slept until morning. They gave

me some hoe-cake for breakfast and fed my horse, and I went back to the road, and reached Chattanooga about ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. I went directly to the hospital, and there found my brother very badly wounded.

The doctor in charge of the hospital said that it would be almost a fatal mistake to attempt to move him at present, so I accordingly staid at Chattanooga, visiting the various camps and hospitals, looking after a good many more Illinois men who were wounded or sick in the hospital, and generally making myself, as far as possible, useful to them; and after about a week the surgeon of my brother's regiment said that he thought the wisest thing I could do was to get him home, if possible. He wasn't getting any better in the hospital, was growing low-spirited, and moving him at any rate might arouse him for a while and be a good thing for him.

I found a teamster who was going to Bridgeport with his wagon for a load of goods

for a sutler, and I got him to drive off into the fields several miles and fill the box of his wagon with straw, first a layer of corn stalks and then the straw, so as to fill the wagon box full, and thus make a comparatively soft bed for my brother to lie on. Upon this straw we spread blankets, and to the bows of the wagon cover we fastened a rope, so that he could steady himself by taking hold of the rope over any rough road that he was obliged to pass. And with this outfit we started for Bridgeport. We were nearly three days on the trip from Chattanooga to Bridgeport, making about twenty-five miles each day. My brother stood the journey very well, indeed. When we got to Bridgeport we found a train ready to start in a short time. I obtained some refreshments for myself and brother, and went on board the train and got a place in the baggage car where my brother could lie down, and we went up to Nashville; from Nashville we got a train to

Louisville, and from Louisville to Chicago. My brother seemed to improve all during the journey. Probably the fact that he was going home had a good effect upon him, and in the course of three or four months he had so improved that he was able to rejoin his command.

His regiment participated in the Atlanta Campaign, and he stayed with his men until Atlanta surrendered, but the fatigue and the hardship of the campaign and the battle fields had worn him substantially out, and after reaching Atlanta he tendered his resignation, which was accepted, and he returned home. He has been an invalid practically ever since. His wound, which we considered as practically healed when he went back to his regiment, broke out again during the Atlanta Campaign, and has been a running abscess from that time to the present.

I was not called upon to go to the front after the Atlanta Campaign, but visited several of the hospitals that had been established along

the line of Sherman's march, and also visited the hospitals at Nashville after Thomas' great victory there, which was probably as effective in ending the war as Lee's surrender at Appomattox—at least it led up to that surrender.

Nothing particularly eventful occurred to me in the years immediately succeeding the close of the war. Two of my brothers, Wells and Edward, located after the close of the war at Warrensburg, Missouri, Wells having commanded a Missouri regiment during the last year and a half of the war. I took considerable interest in seeing these young men located for life, as I thought, in a town which had been fairly loyal for a Missouri town, and they both had fair success there. Wells was elected to the Legislature of Missouri, first to the House of Representatives, and afterwards to the Senate. Edward went into the mercantile business and became quite a large dealer in agricultural implements, as he had a very fertile farming

country about him which the war had stripped of plows, harvesters and threshing machines, all of which had to be purchased anew. About 1870, Wells was appointed attorney for the Wabash road and removed to St. Louis, where he still continues to hold the position, although the road has more than quadrupled the mileage that it had at the time he went with it. Edward remained a couple of years at Warrensburg after Wells left, and then he returned to Chicago, where he has ever since resided.

In 1868 General Grant was nominated for President of the United States, and I took an active part in the campaign. During the session of Congress of 1868–9, Congress passed an act providing for the appointment of circuit judges in all the Federal circuits, and General Grant, in the fall of 1869, nominated Judge Drummond as the circuit judge for our circuit, and tendered me the nomination of district judge, as Judge Drummond's successor.

I, at first, hesitated about accepting the position, but as a seat upon the bench, and especially the Federal bench, is a position which nearly every lawyer aspires to, as it is an honor directly in the line of his profession, I finally accepted the place, and from 1869 to 1893 I was laboriously employed as the District Judge of the Northern District of Illinois.

The Chicago Fire added immensely to the business of the court; and the growth of the City of Chicago also increased it, so that from the time I went upon the Federal bench until my retirement therefrom I was a very busy man. For the first six years I took no vacation, but worked continuously from the beginning to the end of each year, taking my first vacation in the summer of 1876, when I was away from my court about four weeks. I found myself so much refreshed and invigorated by this short rest that I decided that the interests of the court were not impaired by my taking a short

vacation each year, and I accordingly did so from that time until the close of my duties on the bench.

In the summer of 1886 I was a good deal troubled by what the doctors called muscular rheumatism, and upon the advice of a friend concluded to visit a warm spring near Del Norte, in Colorado, where I remained about six weeks. I returned about the first of September, to find my wife very ill. No special disease seemed to exhibit itself, but she was depressed and low-spirited, and her whole system seemed to be out of order. She gradually, but surely, in spite of all that physicians could do, declined from day to day, until finally, on the sixteenth day of October, she died. We had been married about thirty-six years, and during all that time she had been the comfort and stimulus of my life, interesting herself in everything that interested or pleased me, the kindest of mothers as well as the most affectionate of wives.

In the month of July, 1892, President Harrison tendered me the position of one of the counsels of the United States before the Tribunal of Arbitration for the settlement of matters between us and England in regard to the fur seals of the Behring Sea, and, after taking considerable time for consideration, I concluded to accept it, as I had passed the age of seventy years, when I was entitled to retire on full pay, and felt that perhaps this offer of an honorable position afforded me a good opportunity for retiring from the bench. I accordingly tendered my resignation to the President to take effect the first of December, 1892, and from that time on until the first of February I was busily employed with the other counsel in preparing our case for hearing before the Tribunal of Arbitration, and on the first of February, I sailed for Paris, where the Tribunal was to meet. My daughter, Carrie, accompanied me; and, although the work was

arduous. I very much enjoyed our stay in Paris. The sessions of the Tribunal commenced the fore part of March and continued until the first of July, at which time the case went before the arbitrators for final decision.

While the arbitrators were considering the case, my daughter and myself took a tour from Paris through France to Geneva, Switzerland, thence through Switzerland, visiting the most important and romantic portions of that interesting country, we went down the Rhine to Cologne and from there to Amsterdam, The Hague and Brussels and back to Paris. The trip was interesting and instructive, and I enjoyed it very much.

When we reached Paris, we found that the Tribunal had not yet come to a decision, and we accordingly went across the Channel to England and spent a little over a month in visiting the interesting portions of England and Scotland. Our time was too short to justify

us in taking a tour of Ireland, and in fact all too short to see what I well knew was worth seeing in England and Scotland. We returned by one of the American line of steamers, sailing from Portsmouth, and reached home about the 25th of September, since which time I have been emphatically a man of leisure. I was too old to return to the profession—in fact had been away from it so long that I felt I would do myself no credit in resuming practice, but have passed a pleasant, and in many respects interesting, life among my old friends and acquaintances in the town where I had located so many years before.

I can not close this desultory account of myself without paying a merited tribute to my parents.

My father was a plain, unassuming man—a mechanic, and from a long line of mechanics, *and he was a good mechanic.* He had only such a common school education as was given

the sons of mechanics in the latter part of the 18th century. But he was a reader of good books, and far better informed on most matters of general interest than the average men of his occupation. He was an excellent workman, and, above all, an honest man. Plain and unpretentious in all his ways, he had the courage of his convictions on all questions of public interest. He was one of the early anti-slavery men, and courageous in the assertion of his views upon the sin of slavery long before there was any Abolition or Anti-Slavery Party.

My mother, if I do say it, was a remarkable woman—a farmer's daughter, she was intelligent beyond most of the New England women of her class—a great reader, and one who appropriated what she read to aid in the duties of her life as a wife and mother. She was one of the most affectionate and care-taking mothers, and took pride in shaping the minds of her children to fit them for the duties of life.

She was also a woman of splendid courage. Few women could or would have done what she did in starting from central Massachusetts, in the spring of 1831, with four children, the oldest not ten years old, and the youngest but a little over six months old, to make such a journey as she undertook from our New England home to the then wild West, and yet she bore all the fatigue, danger and discomfort of the journey without a murmur, and was, I may say, the most cheerful and even spirited person of the party. And when all the fatigues and trials of the journey were at an end, she moved into a log house, which she made more comfortable and homelike than any such home I have ever seen.

In the midst of these new surroundings and inconveniences, she found time to teach her young children and carry their education on, perhaps as well, if not better, than it had been done in the schools we had left behind—and

withal, no sick neighbor was neglected or went without care, and no stranger was ever denied food or lodging at our house.

But the crucial test of her courage came when, in the Black Hawk war, we fled from our home—she within three months of the birth of a child—my brother, Capt. A. Z. Blodgett—and we were for nearly four months pent up in the fort, not knowing at what moment we might hear the war whoop that would imply death to her children, husband and herself, and yet when her baby was born within two weeks after our return to our home, it was in all respects, both in body and mind, as perfect as any one of her children—all of which evidences a heroic self-control and equanimity of spirit which shows her to have been no common woman, and entitles her memory to the lasting affection of all her descendants to the remotest generation.